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SUBCOMMITTEE ON CRIMINAL JUSTICE, DRUG POLICY, AND HUMAN RESOURCES

WRITTEN STATEMENT OF

RADM JEFFREY HATHAWAY

DIRECTOR

JOINT INTERAGENCY TASK FORCE SOUTH

BEFORE THE 109TH CONGRESS

HOUSE GOVERNMENT REFORM COMMITTEE

SUBCOMMITTEE ON CRIMINAL JUSTICE, DRUG POLICY, AND HUMAN RESOURCES

29 JUNE 2005



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Introduction

Mr. Chairman, thank you for the opportunity to appear before your subcommittee. Joint Interagency Task Force (JIATF) South challenges drug traffickers in the air and on the high seas 24 hours a day, 7 days a week in defense of America's borders. We attack the shipment of illegal drugs and narco-traffickers themselves each and every time we have them in our sights. Our goal is to deny safe haven during any portion of their journey and we work hard in constant support of law enforcement to place the drug traffickers and their drugs in risk of interdiction. Through better intelligence, expanded law enforcement partnerships and the collective efforts of the counterdrug community, JIATF South has been able support ever increasing cocaine disruptions for the last six years with 2004 being a record all time high.

Joint Interagency Task Force South is a National Task Force

JIATF South was created to specifically address the south to north flow of drugs towards the United States from South America. Its roots go back to 1989 when the Department of Defense was congressionally directed as 'the lead agency' for the detection and monitoring (D&M) of drug trafficking events in support of law enforcement. Over the years additional, but appropriate, missions and functions were added to the command's responsibilities. It has taken 16 years to evolve to where we are today, an international, interagency organization that is specifically charged to D&M the flow of illicit trafficking, all executed under a single director.

There are significant strengths that make JIATF South as successful as it is today. Perhaps most noteworthy is that we are optimally designed and organized for success against drug trafficking. The National Interdiction Command and Control Plan created JIATF South as a 'national task force' and intentionally not as a department or agency task force. We are assigned to the Commander, USSOUTHCOM. The national task force concept aggressively creates mutually supporting efforts among its diverse personnel, agencies and countries. The JIATF organizational structure embodies the force-multiplier effect of a task force manned and led by personnel from the various agencies and countries with a counterdrug mission.

The Threat

The drug trafficking threats JIATF South and our country face is wide ranging. It includes the production and movement of drugs and often includes the movement of arms for terrorists - which are paid for by the profit from or the exchange for drugs.

Terrorism and Drugs

Within this hemisphere, we are particularly concerned with three terrorist organizations: the FARC, AUC and ELN. They all operate in Colombia, all are directly involved in the drug trade, and all are a direct threat to the democratic government of Colombia, neighboring nations and the strategic interests of the United States within the hemisphere. Just as importantly, we are concerned with the international terrorist organizations that are known to operate in Central and South America and the Caribbean. Some of these groups directly leverage drug trafficking, which may be cash, weapons, or drugs as a commodity to support terror activities.

Drug Trafficking Organizations

Drug trafficking organizations are usually a close-knit group, often involving family members and are exceptionally difficult to penetrate. They are well funded; the U.N. estimates the drug trade to be a \$400 billion a year industry. With funds of this magnitude, they can afford to buy the latest technology and strong political influences within our theater. Finally, drug traffickers have at their disposal the use of various types of conveyances and modalities to smuggle drugs. The concealment of drugs is only limited by their imaginations. Drug trafficking is an asymmetrical threat that challenges our national security in a manner very similar to terrorism.

The tonnage of drugs being moved, especially cocaine, remains immense. While there is considerable interagency discussion on just how much cocaine is moved within any year, all agree that cocaine is still moved in quantities far in excess of what law enforcement forces can interdict. JIATF South examines the movement of drugs from a demand point of view. The premise of this approach is that the drug traffickers will collectively attempt to produce and ship enough drugs to account for drug losses (seizures plus disruptions), corruption, money laundering, security and enroute consumption to ensure enough cocaine reaches world market end users. Our estimate for calendar year 2005 of cocaine movement using this 'demand' methodology is that 570 metric tons will transit up the Eastern Pacific, Central America and Western Caribbean corridor (the biggest threat vector; accounts for about 86% of all cocaine movement to the U.S.); 100 metric tons will transit the Central and Eastern Caribbean corridor to the U.S. and approximately 350 metric tons will initially transit through the Eastern Pacific and the Caribbean to non-U.S. markets. In total, approximately 1000 metric tons of cocaine will potentially leave the landmass of South America in 2005.

In the Transit Zone, during calendar year 2004, 558 maritime smuggling events and 468 aerial cocaine movement events (numbers were extracted from the Interagency Counterdrug Data Base or CCDB) were documented. If all of these events were disrupted, it would have amounted to about 975 metric tons of cocaine. This amount far exceeds the primary flow that was actually disrupted--approximately 264.5 metric tons. Of this total, JIATF South directly supported the disruption of 217 metric tons (an all time record high for the organization) or put another way, JIATF South supported just over 82% of all documented primary flow cocaine disruptions.

Mission

There is no ambiguity in what we are charged to do. Our mission statement fully supports the D&M of illicit trafficking events. The major components of our mission:

- Detect & monitor illicit air and maritime targets;
- Conduct intelligence fusion (to include targeting narco-terrorists);
- Conduct multi-sensor correlation (radar inputs);
- Handoff the suspected drug trafficking target (air or maritime) to law enforcement agencies/partner nation militaries;
- Promote security cooperation & regional initiatives and;
- Provide sensor surveillance support to the southern approaches to the United States,

In accomplishing our mission, I would like to first highlight the superb personnel that comprise JIATF South and then discuss the significant core competencies that reside within the command.

Interagency and International Personnel

The personnel structure of the JIATF South Team is unique and a major contributor to our successes. We are as much international as we are interagency in composition. We have representatives from the Air Forces of Argentina, Colombia, Ecuador, Peru and Venezuela; the Navies of Colombia, France, El Salvador, Mexico, and the United Kingdom; and a representative from the Brazilian Intelligence Agency. In the near future, we expect to add a liaison officer from the Spanish Guardia Civil and potentially a representative from Trinidad and Tobago. We have representatives from all Services of Department of Defense; Homeland Security provides U.S. Coast Guard and Customs and Border Protection personnel; and DEA and FBI personnel represent the Justice Department contribution. Additionally, all the three letter intelligence codes from Washington, D.C. - NSA, DIA, CIA, NGA, and the NRO have operational personnel embedded in the JIATF South team. An invaluable component is the DoD civilians and contract personnel - all subject matter experts that provide the continuity and backbone for our efforts. This broad spectrum of skill sets comes together with one common objective: supporting our D&M mission. It is important to note that the interagency has personnel here not only in senior liaison officer positions, but also in positions that are fully integrated into the staff and empowered to make decisions to execute our D&M mission. To cite a few examples, the US Coast Guard provides the Director; our Deputy Director for Intelligence is from DEA and our Deputy Director for Operations is from Customs and Border Protection, our 24x7 watch floor is manned with DoD, USCG and CBP personnel.

Intelligence

Intelligence is the crown jewel of our national task force and it would not be immodest to say - for the entire counterdrug community. There is no other counterdrug intelligence organization anywhere that has the breadth, depth, singular focus and synergy found at JIATF South. All-source intelligence fusion and analysis drives our operations and scheme of maneuver. We have a great many sources of information but our most critical input comes from U.S. Law Enforcement. The information is fused with all-source intelligence, analyzed and sanitized as necessary, then aggressively disseminated to our tactical forces - U.S. and our allies.

It is of particular importance to note the extraordinary contribution the JIATF South Tactical Analysis Teams (TAT's). Located in many of the U.S. Embassies, the TAT personnel work closely with the Drug Enforcement Agents within the respective country to glean the tactically actionable information needed to cue the D&M forces. A TAT is modest in size, typically composed of two members. There are currently TAT's deployed to 16 countries. The U.S. Country Teams recognize extraordinary value of this resource and the demand for them is very high. We have approval to expand existing TAT support in three countries; to send a TAT to four new countries; and have pending requests from yet another seven country teams. Funding constraints will dictate how quickly additional TATs can be deployed. Additionally, JIATF South operates the Intelligence Analysis Center (IAC) in Mexico City, Mexico. Similar in function to the TAT's, it is more robust and addresses the international

air and maritime illicit targets entering Mexico. The TAT/IAC program is a model where a very modest investment of personnel pays big dividends for everyone.

Our intelligence is good and getting better by the day. The creative and innovative application of all our intelligence resources is absolutely cutting-edge. However, cueing us that a drug trafficking event is about to take place is not the same as having the fore-knowledge of when and where the drugs departed, what route the traffickers will take, the speed and direction they will travel or the final destination of the drugs. It is quite rare that we have this level of detail on a drug movement. It is worth noting that even the trafficking organizations can't ensure the departure, speed, direction, and delivery of their shipments. While we are at times able to ingeniously use technical intelligence to generally locate targets, the sizable area that we need to monitor still makes this a challenging task.

Herein lies the crux of the problem to be solved; the ability of the United States and its allies to D&M (find, sort, track, and handoff for interdiction) the initial movement of cocaine in the air (representing about 10% of the total volume) and on the high seas (representing about 90% of the total volume) in order to effectively disrupt the drug's transit. These estimations can be translated into expected drug trafficking events. Within the first six months of 2005, we expect 118 to 138 smuggling events by go-fast vessels, 59 to 75 fishing vessel events, and 24 to 31 aircraft flights. A go-fast boat is by far the hardest target to find and collectively they represent our greatest maritime threat. Only a modest fraction of their total movement is detected due to their small size and the paucity of surface surveillance capabilities.

Command and Control

The next core competency I would like to address is our ability to command and control our assigned and apportioned forces through a tremendously large Joint Operating Area of approximately 42 million square miles. We are nationally tasked to coordinate and de-conflict counterdrug operations. On any given day, we are controlling the U.S. and international contributions of 10 to 12 ships and 6 to 10 air sorties. This all takes place in our Joint Operations Center (JOC). The JOC has communications with all assets under our tactical control. Additionally, the JOC fuses multiple sources of radar, such as Relocatable Over-The-Horizon Radar (ROTHR), U.S. and allied ground based radars (GBR) located in both the source and transit zones and radar data from U.S. and allied ships and aircraft to form a single, fully integrated air picture. This radar picture is then exported to a great number of customers within the United States military and law enforcement agencies and as appropriate, to our allies.

Conducting effective operations with forces this diverse requires a common set of standing operating procedures (SOP). One of the most powerful, but often unseen aspects of this command is that all of the contributing services, agencies and countries leave their respective asset employment doctrine at the door as they enter the building. Over the years, the interagency and international partners at JIATF South have established and continually refine a common set of mutually agreed tactics, techniques, and procedures to ensure all forces are fully coordinated, integrated, synchronized and employed to the best possible effect.

The common operating picture, or COP, previously mentioned is also very important. We utilize real time location inputs from all of the U.S. assets and those from our allies in order to generate a complete picture of all friendly forces operating within our Joint Operating Area. The COP also highlights the current targets of interest being tracked. The COP is disseminated over various secure communication systems to U.S. military and law enforcement forces and as

appropriate, to our allied forces. It is with the COP that we ensure that all participants have a clear understanding of the current operational picture.

Deliberate Planning

The last core competency I would like to address is deliberate planning. JIATF South is nationally chartered to provide regional counterdrug planning support to the interagency and partner nations; we expend considerable effort meeting this important requirement. The breadth and depth of the counterdrug skill sets on our planning staff are found nowhere else. Our planning staff works directly with Ambassadors and our country teams downrange. Through the country teams, we integrate partner nations' counterdrug efforts with JIATF South. At any one time throughout the year, one or two bilateral or multilateral counterdrug operations is underway within JIATF South's JOA - which uniquely encompasses the entire SOUTHCOM AOR, as well as portions of the AORs of PACOM, and NORTHCOM. We host a semi-annual conference where all members from the counterdrug community within Central and South America, the Caribbean, Mexico and the United States meet at JIATF South to review the efforts, results and lessons learned from the previous six months; then discuss new initiatives and proposals and initiate planning, coordination and synchronization of counterdrug operations for the next six to nine months. As a result of this process, the entire counterdrug community has an opportunity to be heard and understood; their respective efforts orchestrated to best overall effect.

Challenges in Capabilities

The over-arching impediment to increasing our support to interdiction is the lack of D&M resources in the maritime arena, which represents about 90% of all drugs trafficking movement. The lack of persistent maritime surveillance is our number one problem for the near future. While we continue to improve intelligence, predictive analysis and tactical cuing, our limited maritime surveillance capabilities make it a challenge to locate cued targets once they are in the vast open ocean. The air portion of D&M effort is marginally better as we utilize ROTH, mentioned earlier, to be able to conduct air surveillance over a substantial portion of our JOA at any one time. While we detect a major portion of all air traffic, we remain challenged to fully sort them all in order to identify drug flights. We lack sufficient ability to put 'eyes on' the suspect aircraft.

Detection Shortfalls

Overall, we see the glass as being half-full regarding the assets assigned or apportioned to the command. Notwithstanding the fiercely competing demands on scarce resources - which in turn impacts on the forces available for the conduct of counterdrug operations - DOD, the interagency and international community has made a tremendous effort to provide what we need. There is however, one area we noted earlier that deserves special attention, maritime surface surveillance.

JIATF South is challenged to adequately detect maritime vessels, especially the go-fast boats so commonly used. For example, in 2004, the interagency documented 331 go-fast events within the transit zone. Of the 331 documented events, 238 were not detected while in transit. That leaves 93 that were detected and of this number, 73 were successfully interdicted.

Regarding the 20 events detected but not successfully interdicted - no surface asset was available to conduct the interdiction. The bottom line: We detect just under 3 of 10 go-fast events; of those we do detect, almost 3 out of 4 are successfully interdicted, the traffickers are put in handcuffs and are destined to enter the U.S. (or an international) judicial system for prosecution.

The importance of MPA

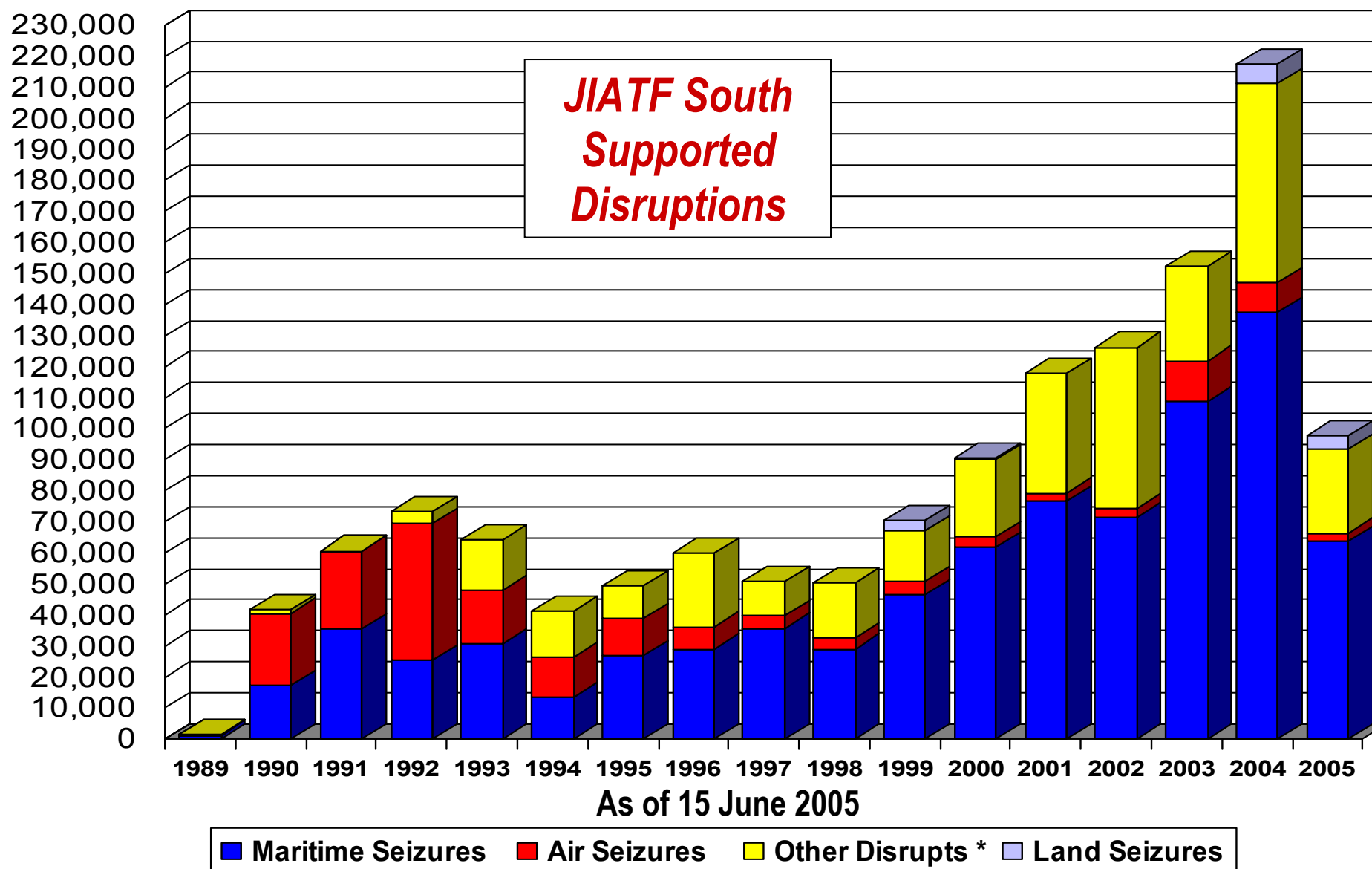
Of all our asset shortages, maritime patrol aircraft (MPA), which currently provide long range surface maritime surveillance, is in critically short supply. MPA flying in support of ships significantly increases the probability of detection. To elaborate, we typically use a search box that is 75 x 150 nautical miles. A ship on patrol within this box has about a 9% chance of detecting a go-fast boat as the ship's radar does not 'see' over the immediate horizon. However, if the ship has a helicopter, it can extend the horizon from the ship and increases the probability of detection to approximately 20%. If we are able to provide a maritime patrol aircraft to help cue the ship and helicopter, the probability of detection increases to approximately 70%. The value of MPA and its contribution to our success rate can not be overstated. To assist the efficiency of the MPA aircraft, we will often use the U.S. Air Force E-3 Sentry (AWACS) or the Customs and Border Patrol P-3B AEW to help cue the MPA. Flying very high, these assets have the capability to surveil large areas of the ocean, and in turn, provide accurate suspected ship locations for the MPA to further investigate. The MPA flies from point to point and does not commit flying hours searching for surface targets. Without an asset cueing the MPA, the MPA is required to fly a search pattern then investigate each surface contact as it is found - a far less efficient use of its on-station air hours.

While ROTH supports the aircraft detection effort 24x7, the capability to continuously surveil and detect surface maritime targets in a similar manner does not exist. Until a long term, all weather persistent surface surveillance solution is put in place, we will continue to rely heavily on long range maritime patrol aircraft, whose numbers are decreasing. Clearly, we must solve our detection shortfalls to ensure we can find maritime targets.

Closing

In spite of our challenges we continue to be successful for two primary reasons. First, is Unity of Command - the entire JIATF South team works with a common vision and a common purpose. The second is Unity of Effort. The tremendous caliber of people who dedicate their professional talents to safeguarding America's citizens by interdicting the drug traffickers far from our borders is simply extraordinary. This strategically important endeavor warrants our continued best efforts.

KGS OF COCAINE DISRUPTED



* Drugs lost in Jettisons, Scuttles & Crashes